

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council  
Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
December 14, 2015  
Buena Vista, New Castle

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**Call to Order:** Senator Blevins, Chair, called the DVCC Quarterly meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

**Introductions:** In attendance were the following DVCC members: Senator Patricia Blevins, Diane Glenn, Secretary Carla Benson-Green, Secretary James Mosley, Representative Stephanie Bolden, Senator Catherine Cloutier, Dana Harrington Conner, Judge Carl Danberg, Attorney General Matthew Denn, Representative Deborah Hudson, Chief Defender Brendan O'Neill, Cpl./3 Adrienne Owen and Chief Judge Michael Newell. Also in attendance were Cherelyn Homlish (People's Place), Blanche Creech (People's Place) Renee Buskirk for Commissioner Robert Coupe, Judge Rocanelli for President Judge Jurden (Superior Court), Lisa Borin Ogden (VCAP), Cari Chapman (DOJ), Karen Records (DSSC-OCS), Maureen Monagle (CJC), Joe Miller (WPD), Addie Asay (Family Court), Shamla McLaurin (Catholic Charities), Jay Lynch (DHSS), Nancy McGee (SAND), Tim Collins (member of the public), and DVCC Staff Ellie Torres, Natasha Smith, Aimee String, Pat Kwetkauskie and Karen Ewing.

**Minutes:** A motion to approve the September 14, 2015 minutes was made, seconded and the minutes were approved.

**Vote Chair & Vice Chair:** There was a reminder that the statute will be amended this year to make the term of Chair and Vice Chair two years instead of one year. Senator Blevins was nominated for Chair and Dana Harrington Conner was nominated as Vice Chair. No additional nominations were submitted. A motion was made, seconded and the nominations were approved.

**Report on Family Visitation Centers:** Karen Records updated the Council on the Family Visitation Centers. In 2013, DHSS was awarded an OVW Safe Haven grant in order to add a new center in the MOT area. To date, OVW has not approved an adequate location for the center.

The Family Visitation Steering Committee was established in 2012 to address usage of visitation centers. Judges, law enforcement, mediators and potential referral sources were surveyed in 2013 and it was learned there was a lack of information available on the services of the Family Visitation Centers. The Committee has since held parent education groups, Open Houses, developed a new brochure, and trainings through CHILD, Inc. and People's Place. Sunstate Security assisted with the review of security and threat assessments at the centers. Two centers received upgraded security systems and additional guards. To date, Sunstate Security continues to give monthly status updates. The Committee is also working to address myths around transportation, fees, acceptable rules, referral process and waitlists. A 2016 goal for the Committee will be reviewing the Family Visitation Center Standards for relevance and terminology. Another goal will be to address the number of referrals versus participation in the Centers. In response to a question regarding a waitlist for visitation, Karen and Blanche Creech

from People's Place indicated that with party participation, a family can begin to utilize the Family Visitation Center resources in approximately two weeks from receiving the referral.

Karen indicated the DHSS website will soon be updated to provide user-friendly information about Family Visitation. In the meantime, Ellie Torres encouraged other agencies wishing to provide the information to link to the DVCC web page which links to each center.

**VAWA Vote and DV Fund Report:** The total deposits made to the Domestic Violence Fund for the July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 period was \$96,492.50.

A competitive solicitation was released in October, making \$91,668.50 available for non-profit organizations to provide legal services to victims of domestic violence.

The CJC received two applications, totaling \$95,243.00.

- Delaware Volunteer Legal Services (\$43,555.75) – Continues attorney services to 80 unduplicated victims of domestic violence to provide assistance with filing Protection from Abuse Orders in New Castle County.
- Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (\$48,112.75) – Continues to provide legal representation for 50 low-income victims of domestic violence to obtain Protection from Abuse Orders in Kent (25) and Sussex (25) Counties.

A motion was made by Judge Carl Danberg to approve the two applications. Motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

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Delaware was awarded \$913,366.00 for the FY 2014 S.T.O.P VAWA Formula Grant Program.

The DVCC and CJC have previously approved several projects under the NPO Victims Services, Law Enforcement, Prosecution and Court categories.

The STOP Formula Grant was impacted by the Prison Rape Elimination Act I (PREA). Per the federal requirements, 4.75% of the State's award must be used towards PREA Compliance (\$43,385.00).

The Department of Corrections submitted a proposal to the VAWA Implementation Committee. The Committee is recommending this project for funding.

- Department of Corrections (\$43,385) – contract a clinician to provide a psychoeducational support group to at least 53 women in Baylor Women's Correctional Institution who may be victims/survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

An unobligated balance of \$61,751.00 remains pending further review.

A motion was made by Diane Glenn to approve the DOC application. Motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

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Delaware was awarded \$904,496.00 for the FY 2015 S.T.O.P. VAWA Formula Grant Program.

The FY 2015 Grant is the second year under the “FY 2014-FY2016 Three Year Implementation Plan” that was approved by the Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) in October 2014.

Per federal guidelines, S.T.O.P. Funds must be distributed in the following amounts:

- 30% to Non-profit Victim Services
  - 10% of which must go to Culturally Specific agencies
- 25% for Prosecution
- 25% for Law Enforcement
- 5% to the Courts
- 15% for Discretionary use

These are projects to continue, at level funding, under the NPO Victim Services, Law Enforcement and Prosecution categories, as well as the PREA allocation. An unobligated balance remains pending further review of the Committee in the following categories:

- 5% that must go to the Courts (\$45,225)
- Law Enforcement (\$50,740)
- Discretionary (3,981)

The only modification was that the DVCC will assist with the administrative responsibilities in the planning of statewide law enforcement conference and training event(s).

A motion was made by Representative Deborah Hudson to approve applications as listed on the CJC Standard Form. Motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

**Strategic Plan Follow-up and 2016 Goals:** As prescribed in the by-laws, Ellie Torres reviewed the Council goals and progress in achieving the goals. In October 2014, three action steps identified at the Council retreat included holding a yearly summit; developing a statewide stakeholder resource list; and developing a committee structure to include clear purpose and goals. While there was not a domestic violence summit in 2015, the DVCC was involved in developing a domestic violence track for the Protecting Delaware’s Children conference in March; participated in the planning of the symposium at Widener in April; held three domestic violence prevention forums in October; and participated with the planning of the annual law enforcement conference in November. While continuing to work towards an on-line resource for victim service providers, the Victim’s Rights Task Force has a resource list that has been placed on the DVCC website. Finally, each committee has approved goals for 2016 which are now located on the DVCC website.

In 2016, the DVCC will also complete an evaluation of the Batterers’ Intervention Program (BIP), provide in-state training for BIP providers, complete the FIRT database and revise the Medical Manual.

**Family Court Enhancement Project (FCEP) Update:** Chief Judge Newell gave a brief history of the FCEP which began 1 ½ years ago to provide technical assistance to four selected jurisdictions. Recently, the FCEP was affected by the loss of Judge Cooper and the resignation of Tara Andrews, project coordinator. The two subcommittees have continued to meet and make progress during this transition. Mediation training also took place this fall through the University of Delaware. Judge Ranji has been chosen to replace Judge Cooper as the new Domestic Violence Liaison Judge in Family Court. A new project coordinator, Ellen Cooper, has been hired and will bring a unique style to the project. Chief Judge Newell complemented Addie Asay for her day-to-day work to keep the project on task during the transition.

**High Risk Team Update:** At the September quarterly meeting, Detective Miller, Wilmington Police Department and Deanna Jason, CHLD, Inc. gave an overview of the benefits for creating a High Risk Team in Delaware. It was decided that an ad hoc committee of the Criminal Justice Committee could explore the possibility and provide a report to the Council. The ad hoc committee had a conference call with Kelly Dunne, Chief Operating Officer of the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, Inc., regarding the steps needed to create a formal high risk team. While helpful, Ms. Dunne did note that Delaware would need to complete several steps in order to receive formal technical assistance from Boston including: 1) attend a webinar; 2) complete an application; and 3) obtain OVW approval of a site. If accepted, a customized model would be developed for the Delaware. The ad hoc committee has decided to move forward with the Boston process but will continue to explore other state models.

#### **DVCC Committee Updates:**

**Legislative Committee:** Senator Blevins stated that the Council reviews legislation twice a year at the May and December meetings. In November, the Legislative Committee reviewed legislation regarding the first offenders domestic violence diversion program; changes to the DVCC statute; and amending the definition of family. Additional legislation is still being reviewed but a full update will occur at the May quarterly meeting.

**Treatment Committee:** The DVCC oversees the certification of the Batterers' Intervention Programs which currently has four certified programs statewide. Aimee String will work with Barbara Goldberg, an independent evaluator, to evaluate these certified programs. The evaluation will include determining recidivism rates and modification to offender beliefs. Aimee will work with Dr. Eric Mankowski, Portland State University, to utilize his research tool which may include Delaware in nationwide talks regarding Batterers' Intervention Programs. Delaware has a unique opportunity to be in the forefront of evaluation. The goal is to have the project completed within six months.

**Fatal Incident Review Team:** Dana Harrington Conner provided the Council options for the near-death definition in the FIRT statute. The definition would capture cases such as strangulation. After consulting with Dr. Websdale, Director of the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative, the definition should be broad enough to capture a sampling of cases while not making the reporting of the cases too burdensome. There was a discussion and it was decided that Natasha will circulate the near-death definition to FIRT for a decision.

Another item discussed at the recent Legislative Committee was the need for victim consent prior to near-death review. It was decided that this will not be included in the FIRT statute. If consent is required and FIRT is unable to locate victim, a review would not be possible. FIRT will contact victims as a courtesy to see if they wish to be interviewed, and the process is confidential, but requiring a consent is not practical.

Dr. Websdale and his team have offered to provide a technical assistance meeting in the spring. Dana also stated that the FIRT rules/procedures will be modified.

**Announcements:** The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCADV) has a new Executive Director, Sue Ryan.

**Public Comment:** Tim Collins, member of the public, made statements to the Council regarding his concerns that men are also victims of domestic violence. He distributed a handout to the Council and stated that SB99 addresses false allegations in PFA matters.

**Next Meeting Date:** March 14, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.